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ABSTRACT

In January, 1969, Hofstra University launched a program of student evaluations of courses. The evaluations had two aims: (1) to provide a general picture of student opinion of courses, and (2) to help produce more effective teaching by providing feedback to the instructors. The Course Evaluation Program was a cooperative enterprise involving students, faculty, and administration. The questionnaires were processed by the Computer Center and analyzed by the Center for the Study of Higher Education. Results were obtained from 73 percent of the courses taught in the fall semester. Results indicated that a significantly larger percentage of students taking graduate courses reacted favorably to most items than did students taking courses at the undergraduate level. Almost 50 percent of the faculty, and over one quarter of the students found the course evaluations meaningful. The results of the questionnaire are analyzed in detail in this report. (AF)

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CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

Course Evaluations at Hofstra University, 1969

Paula Witheiler and Harold E. Yuker

Introduction. In early 1966 investigations into the possible uses of student evaluation of teachers were initiated. The investigations and subsequent planning involved the University Senate, the Student Affairs Committee, and the Center for the Study of Higher Education. A survey indicated that 89% of the students and 68% of the faculty respondents approved of such an evaluation. In the fall of 1968 the university faculty approved a set of procedures devised by members of the Student Affairs Committee with the help of the staff of the Center for the Study of Higher Education. The plan called for four course evaluations to be conducted in the 1968-69 and the 1969-70 academic years. The first two evaluations were conducted at the end of the fall 1968 and spring 1969 semesters. A decision was made to suspend the course evaluation scheduled for January 1970 since the results of the first two administrations had not been examined. Whether the course evaluations will be conducted at the end of the spring 1970 semester has still to be decided.

Procedures. 1) Three evaluation forms were constructed by members of the Student Affairs Committee with the help of the Center for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE). 2) A special answer sheet was devised, and procedures for presenting the results were developed by the staff of the CSHE. 3) The forms were distributed and collected by members of the Student Senate in accordance with a plan devised at the CSHE to insure the complete privacy of individual results. 4) A special computer program was developed, and the forms were run at the Hofstra Computer Center. 5) The results for each individual class section were collected and distributed to the instructors by the staff of CSHE. The results of the January evaluation were distributed in April, and the results of the May administration were distributed in September. 6) Results for individual classes were combined to yield norms for departments and schools. The January norms were made available to each department chairman and the deans in June; the results of the May administration were distributed in February. 7) In October 1969 a form was distributed to faculty members designed to elicit their reactions to the course evaluation procedure. A question relating to student reaction was included in the course evaluation forms distributed to students in May.

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Participation. Although the faculty had voted that all courses within the University should be evaluated, results were obtained from only 73% of the 1,347 courses taught in the fall semester. Participation varied from department to department and from one type of course to another. The extent of participation ranged from 0% in some of the LAS courses, 37% in Biology, and 39% in Geology, to 100% in Instructional Communications, Reading, and several of the LAS units. The median extent of participation by sub-units within the University was as follows: School of Business, 88%; LAS II, 87%; Social Sciences, 84% Humanities, 82%; School of Education, 81%; Freshman Seminar, 78%; LAS I, 55%; Sciences, 50%. In general, the participation was greatest in the introductory undergraduate courses (median = 87%) and smallest in the graduate courses (median = 67%) with the other undergraduate courses being in between (median = 83%).

Specific results. Data presented in the body of the report give results for each of the three categories of courses both for the University as a whole and for each school separately. Analysis of the University norms shows that a significantly larger percentage of students taking graduate courses reacted favorably to most items than did students taking courses at either undergraduate level. In responding to the two summary questions, significantly larger percentages of students taking graduate courses rated their courses above average and indicated that they had learned more than average in them. The University norms as well as those for each of the schools can be used for purposes of evaluating comparative strengths and weaknesses of courses and instructors. They can also be used by instructors as normative data for judging the strengths and weaknesses of each individual course.

Reactions. Faculty reactions to the evaluations were obtained from 196 instructors who returned a one-page, 11-item questionnaire. We assume that those who did not return the questionnaires had neither very positive nor very negative attitudes. About 47% of the faculty reacted positively, compared to 20% who reacted negatively; the other 33% were neutral. Almost two out of every three faculty members said the evaluations should be continued; 50% wanted them given every semester.

Student reactions were less negative than has been indicated in some of the public statements by students. About 39% of the students who filled out course evaluations in May responded to the question: "How meaningful are course evaluations at Hofstra?" Over 40% of the respondents said that they believed the course evaluations were meaningless, compared to 29% who said they were meaningful, and 28% who were neutral. Thus, almost half of the faculty, and over one-quarter of the students had positive reactions.

These data should be balanced against the reactions of individual faculty members. How many negative reactions does a positive response of "The results were extremely useful to me, and I intend to adjust my teaching accordingly" compensate for?

The data obtained in the evaluations were fruitfully utilized in several ways. There were, however, some needs of students and administrators that were not met. In view of these unmet needs it is suggested that before further evaluations are undertaken, the goals of the evaluation should be decided upon. Four interrelated types of goals should be considered.

1) If the goal is to provide feedback to the instructor so that he can evaluate and improve his teaching, evaluation should be voluntary. Each instructor should decide how to evaluate, using the services of CSHE and the Computer Center where appropriate. Results could be confidential.

2) If the goal is to provide information to students, all (or almost all) courses should be evaluated by all of the students (or at least a representative sample of students), and the results must be made public. This is what the Student Senate will attempt.

3) If the goal is to provide information to department chairmen and deans that would be useful in making decisions regarding retention, promotion, salary increases, or tenure, the evaluations could either be university-wide, or could be selective in terms of the course sections evaluated. It would be necessary to obtain the responses of all or most of the students in a given class, and the results would be made available to appropriate administrators.

4) If the goal is to provide a profile of the University and the schools and departments within the University, this was accomplished by the evaluations in 1969. Similar evaluations could be conducted every three to five years in order to keep the profile current.

(Copies of the full report are available from the Center for the Study of Higher Education.)

Report No. 90
March 1970

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY

Course Evaluations at Hofstra University, 1969

Paula Witheiler and Harold E. Yuker

In January 1969 a program of student evaluations of courses at Hofstra University was launched. The evaluations had two aims. First, to provide a general picture of student opinion of courses at Hofstra, and second, to help produce more effective teaching at the school by providing feedback to instructors.

The Course Evaluation program was a cooperative enterprise involving Hofstra students, faculty, and administration. Questionnaires were developed by a student-faculty committee; printed material was designed and executed by the Center for the Study of Higher Education; members of the Student Senate distributed, collected, and transported the questionnaires to the Computer Center for processing. The CSHE analyzed the data, and addressed and sent the results to instructors, the heads of departments, and deans.

Background of the Program

The origins of course evaluations at Hofstra are described in the following paragraphs excerpted from the Report of the Student Affairs Committee on Student Evaluation of Teachers, March 6, 1968, Office of the Secretary of the Student Affairs Committee.

> At the request of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, in the spring of 1966 the Student Affairs Committee began to investigate the question of student evaluation of teachers. The subsequent year's study was based on three separate investigations; gathering data on similar programs at other colleges and universities; polling the student body at Hofstra; polling the full-time faculty at Hofstra.
>
> Because the results of all three areas of research point to widespread acceptance of the principle of student evaluation, the Student Affairs Committee recommends to the Faculty Senate that a program for student evaluation of teachers be established at Hofstra. The Committee further recommends that results of such student evaluation be controlled strictly and made available only to the professor himself or anyone he chooses to show it to. Finally, the Committee is convinced that such a program can help produce more effective teaching at Hofstra....

> The questionnaire circulated by the Committee and replied to by 950 Hofstra students(approximately 20% of the full-time student body) and by 196 faculty members (approximately 49% of full-time faculty) produced generally positive results.....both students and faculty favor a program of student evaluation of teachers. Eighty-nine percent of the students and 68% of the faculty voiced their approval. It is on this basis that the Committee recommends such a program be established...

In May 1968, the Executive Committee of the University Senate approved the recommendations of the Student Affairs Committee for Student Evaluation of Faculty. In September of that year the Committee of the University Senate recommended the following plan to the Faculty (From Report to the Faculty Committees of the University Senate, 17 September 1968):

> ...a. Initially the questionnaires (or some of them) worked out by student members of the Student Affairs Committee and Dr. Yuker shall be used. The SAC is requested to select, in consultation with Dr. Yuker, the forms to be used and to make recommendations to the Senate Faculty Committee by the first of November.
>
> b. Each instructor shall indicate on a distributed option sheet which questionnaire he prefers for his students to use.
>
> c. The Student Senate has volunteered to distribute during the last two weeks of each semester the evaluation forms and to devise procedural controls to insure that no student receives more than one form for each course in which he is registered.
>
> d. The forms are to be filled out at the student's leisure by the last day scheduled for examinations. The Student Senate will provide a central collection point and return the completed forms to the CSHE.
>
> e. The Center shall record from the completed forms meaningful data for a general picture of student opinion of instruction at Hofstra, transmit this information to the Student Senate (which has volunteered to devise some suitable vehicle to communicate the information to the students) and the Center shall send the completed forms to the individual instructors who may make what use of them they please...

At the regular meeting of the Faculty held on October 4, 1968, the plan as outlined in the September 17 report to the Faculty was accepted. Since Hofstra had an Optical Mark Page Reader which could read the information from IBM answer sheets directly into the computer, it was decided to include all 12,181 full-time, part-time, undergraduate and graduate students in the evaluation project.

Implementation of the plan was to be the responsibility of three groups: the CSHE was to prepare all the material for the course evaluation project and be responsible for returning the results to the individual instructors; the Student Senate was to arrange for the distribution, collection and transportation of all questionnaire material to the Computer Center; and the Computer Center was to process the data.

Procedures

The planning of the project began on October 5, 1968 and continued through December of that year. During those months the CSHE arranged a series of meetings at which:

1) An IBM answer sheet tailored to the specific needs of the course evaluation project, but also useful as a general purpose sheet, was designed and 54,000 sheets ordered.

2) Two of the three forms of the course evaluation questionnaire that had been developed by student members of the Student Affairs Committee were adapted for use with IBM answer sheets. The two instruments were different in both form and content. Form 1 was concerned with evaluating the instructor's classroom behavior and asked if the student had or had not personally observed the behavior described sometime during the course. Form 2, on the other hand, was designed to evaluate all aspects of the course, including the instructor's classroom behavior. Copies of the questionnaires are available on request.

3) A list of instructions for administering the instruments was prepared.

4) Print-out forms of the results of the course evaluation were designed with the help of the staff of the Computer Center.

Late in October, a memo signed by the Provost was sent to the chairmen of all 45 departments requesting information from their faculties as to which questionnaire form they intended to use and the number of copies they would require. On the basis of the responses, 17,500 Form 1 questionnaires, 36,500 Form 2 questionnaires, and 25,000 instruction sheets were ordered from the Secretary of the University.

To insure the complete anonymity of instructors and students, lists of courses, by code numbers, were prepared for use by the Student Senate and the Computer Center. The only list containing both the titles of courses and their assigned instructors was put under lock and key in the office of the CSHE. Charts listing the location of departments and the quantities of material each had requested, were prepared.

An attempt was made to publicize the program in order to assure maximum cooperation by both students and faculty. Editorials and feature articles describing the project appeared in various Hofstra publications. Several student groups held meetings to discuss the project and one such group (Alpha Sigma Lambda) offered to be of assistance. In late December a letter describing in some detail the program and the procedure to be used in carrying it out was sent to all full-time and part-time members of the faculty.

The course evaluations were administered in class during the last two weeks of classes in January 1969. Members of the Student Senate distributed the material (two types of questionnaires, answer sheets, instruction sheets, and mailing envelopes) to each Departmental Office. Each faculty member picked up the necessary materials in the Departmental Office and administered the evaluations. After the evaluations were conducted the answer sheets were delivered in sealed envelopes either to the Student Senate Office (day) or the University College Office (evening). Members of the Student Senate then delivered the sealed answer sheets to the Computer Center and the other materials to CSHE. The total time for distribution, administration, and return was 3½ weeks.

The Computer Center staff, with extra help, prepared the 25,000 answer sheets for machine processing. Data from each answer sheet were transferred to an IBM card; it took 15 cards to record the data from each sheet. Once on cards, the data were tabulated according to course code number and then percentage distributions of responses were calculated for each course. Print-out sheets of results called Profiles, together with the original answer sheets, were put into envelopes bearing the identifying course code number and sent to the CSHE office where a sheet of instructions for interpretation was inserted and the envelopes sealed. The instructor's name and department were written on the envelope and it was mailed.

In order to provide meaningful comparisons, several special group profiles were prepared. Courses were separated into the following groups: 1) Introductory courses 2) All other undergraduate courses, 3) Graduate courses, 4) Special request profiles of introductory courses, and 5) Special request profiles of courses other than introductory courses. The Computer Center tabulated results separately for each department, special program, school, and for the entire University. Special request profiles were constructed only from Form 2 data. No profiles that included less than three courses were released in order to protect the anonymity of the participating instructors. Each administrator received separate profiles for introductory, undergraduate, and graduate courses, for Form 1 and Form 2.

A second series of University-wide course evaluations took place in May 1969. Form 2A, a revision of Form 2 that included questions appropriate for art courses, lab courses, and seminars, as well as a question regarding the student's opinion of course evaluations, was used. About 1,226, 67% of the approximately 1,834 courses scheduled, participated. The experience gained during the first course evaluation, was invaluable. Materials were ordered and distributed without any of the problems encountered previously. The use of Student Senate members as clerical assistants both lowered the cost of operation and made it possible to start processing the data very soon after the answer sheets were returned. A further reduction in cost and effort was realized when all clerical work connected with the return of the profiles to instructors was handled by CSHE research assistants. All course profiles were sent to instructors during the first week of the fall 1969 semester and group profiles were prepared for distribution in February 1970. The delay in the distribution of group profiles resulted from the inability of the Computer Center to process the data along with all of its other jobs. The new equipment installed in January 1970 greatly facilitated processing of course evaluation data.

Participation

A total of 24,977 completed answer sheets evaluating 73% (1,340) of the 1,847 courses selected for evaluation at Hofstra University during the fall 1968 semester were returned by the students. Almost four times as many courses used questionnaire Form 2 (1,067) as used Form 1 (273). All departments that received evaluation material participated in the program to some extent. Through error the departments of Drama and Speech were not given any material, therefore could not participate and are not included in the following analysis.

Table 1 shows the number of scheduled courses and percentage distribution of course participation by departments. Columns 7 and 8 of the table show the total participation for all departments in the University, grouped according to school or special program. Participation by the 43 departments ranged from a high of 100% of the offered courses, to a low of 37%. About 14% of the departments had relatively low participation rates (six departments had return rates that were more than one standard deviation below the University mean).

The average participation rate of courses offered in the several schools and programs ranged from 86% for the School of Business to 59% for the LAS program. The 25 participating departments within HCLAS had an average participation rate of 71%, and ranged from 37% to 95%. Participation for the six departments of the School of Business averaged 86% and ranged from 73% to 92%, while the range for participation in the program for the nine departments in the School of Education was from 63% to 100% with an average rate of 84%.

Participation tended to decline as the level of courses increased so that the poorest participation was at the graduate level; 77% (514) of the introductory courses (Group I), 75% (610) of the undergraduate courses (Group II), and 68% (216) of the graduate courses (Group III) participated in the program.

Table 1

Use of Course Evaluations
Percentage participation and number of courses scheduled, by departments and schools, cross tabulated by course level.

School and Department	Course Level: Introductory N	Introductory %	Undergraduate N	Undergraduate %	Graduate N	Graduate %	Total N	Total %
University Average	666	77	814	75	316	68	1796	75
ECLAS Average	468	77	626	72	111	46	1205	71
Anthropology	11	100	5	80	4	75	20	90
Biology	37	32	24	38	9	56	70	37
Chemistry	17	70	18	50	--	--	35	60
Economics	45	56	29	72	5	40	79	61
Eng'g. Science	12	50	52	62	--	--	64	59
English	54	83	108	87	9	78	171	85
Fine Arts	5	80	59	81	--	--	64	81
Foreign Language	34	94	18	39	4	50	56	73
French	27	96	8	100	3	67	38	95
General Language	--	--	8	87	2	100	10	90
Geography	9	89	3	100	--	--	12	92
Geology	8	50	6	50	4	0	18	39
History	36	100	38	76	8	38	82	83
Humanities	1	100	--	--	4	75	5	80
Mathematics	25	96	46	93	9	33	80	87
Music	14	78	58	40	1	0	73	46
Natural Science	8	38	--	--	1	100	9	44
Philosophy	20	100	12	67	1	0	33	85
Physics and Astronomy	23	39	34	62	5	20	62	50
Political Science	14	86	20	100	4	0	38	84
Psychology	21	90	45	64	29	45	95	64
Social Science	--	--	--	--	5	60	5	60
Social Science & Religion	3	100	5	60	--	--	8	75
Sociology	14	93	20	90	1	0	35	88
Spanish	30	87	10	90	3	33	43	84

contd

School and Department	Course Level: Introductory N	Introductory %	Undergraduate N	Undergraduate %	Graduate N	Graduate %	Total N	Total %
LAS I and LAS II								
Average	71	59					71	59
LAS I								
Average	37	49					37	49
English	13	85	--	--	--	--	13	85
Freshman Seminar	6	0	--	--	--	--	6	0
History	12	8	--	--	--	--	12	8
Social Science	6	100	--	--	--	--	6	100
LAS II								
Average	34	71					34	71
Biology	8	62	--	--	--	--	8	62
English	6	100	--	--	--	--	6	100
Freshmen Seminar	6	0	--	--	--	--	6	0
Humanities	7	87	--	--	--	--	7	87
Social Science	7	100	--	--	--	--	7	100
Freshman Seminar								
Average	45	78					45	78
School of Business								
Average	55	87	80	87	32	78	167	86
Accounting, Business Law, Bus. Writing	19	84	31	81	2	100	52	83
Business Statistics	8	100	11	82	5	100	24	92
Finance	14	86	8	88	5	100	27	89
General Business	5	100	6	100	11	45	22	73
Management	5	100	15	93	7	86	27	92
Marketing	4	50	9	100	2	100	15	87
School of Education								
Average	27	100	100	85	173	81	300	84
Counselor Education	--	--	--	--	12	75	12	75
Ed. Administration	--	--	--	--	32	81	32	81
Ed. Psychology	--	--	15	93	12	25	27	63
Elem. Education	--	--	46	83	35	97	81	88
Foundation of Education	13	100	7	71	14	93	34	91
Instr. Communications	--	--	--	--	7	100	7	100
Reading	14	100	4	100	21	100	39	100
Secondary Education	--	--	29	83	26	73	55	78
Special Education	--	--	7	100	14	57	21	71

University Profiles

Form 1. The percentage of students who indicated that they observed behavior described in Form 1 is listed in rank order in Table 2. As can be seen from the table, the items in the top 26 ranks described classroom behavior that can be characterized as attributes of good teaching while the items in the bottom 24 ranks cannot be so characterized. It would appear that Hofstra students were pleased with their faculty, for an average of 68% of them indicated that they observed classroom behavior included in the 26 items ranked at the top while an average of only 13% observed classroom behavior that was included among the 24 lowest ranked items. The classroom behaviors that were observed by the largest percentage of respondents were "enthusiasm for subject matter" (86%) and "answered students' questions as completely as possible" (85%). Other positive behaviors observed by at least three out of every four students included:

Related the course material to real life situations;
Lectured fluently;
Gave ample notice for lengthy assignments;
Introduced humor to stimulate class interest;
Demonstrated the importance of the subject matter.

Several negative behaviors were reported by about one fifth of the students. These included:

Lectured in a rambling fashion;
Did not explain the basis of his grading system;
Did not discuss exams in class;
Lectured in a monotone;
Often came to class late;
Missed class meetings more than once.

Form 2. Separate Form 2 norms were calculated for each of the following: undergraduate introductory courses, all other undergraduate courses, graduate courses; for each school, and for the University as a whole. For the purposes of analysis the top two of the five possible ratings were combined to give the percentages of students who gave above average responses to items 1-16 and 25-33. The percent who gave a response rating of three was used for those items where this was the "best" response (items 17-24).

Table 2

Percentage of Students Who Observed the Classroom Behavior Described

Rank Order	Item No.		Percent (N=4396)
1	45	Showed enthusiasm for subject matter	86
2	40	Answered students questions as completely as possible	85
3	47	Related the course material to real-life situations	78
4	15	Lectured fluently	78
5	38	Gave ample notice for lengthy assignments	77

contd

Rank Order	Item No.		Percent (N=4396)
6	5	Introduced humor to stimulate class interest	76
7	37	Demonstrated the importance and significance of his subject matter	75
8	33	Clearly stated the purpose and objectives of the course	72
9	42	Displayed patience when students asked irrelevant and disruptive questions	72
10	7	Adjusted his pace to the needs of the class	71
11	30	Demonstrated tolerance towards students' personal beliefs	70
12	24	Differentiated between significant and nonsignificant material	70
13	10	Made self available to assist students outside of class time	69
14	22	Obtained students' reaction to course material	68
15	27	Used class discussions to bring out contrasting views	67
16	26	To the extent possible, scheduled exams to reduce conflicts	66
17	35	Lectured in a manner which held class attention	66
18	29	Demonstrated extensive knowledge of the literature	65
19	32	Introduced new and stimulating ideas about the subject	63
20	8	Used leading questions to help students answer own questions	62
21	3	Learned students names quickly	61
22	18	Summarized material in a manner which aided retention	61
23	44	Stimulated students to think about the subject outside of class time	61
24	48	Praised students for good work	61
25	46	Used visual aides to clarify the lesson material	43
26	16	Prepared hand-out sheets to complement lectures	42
27	43	Lectured in a rambling fashion	23
28	12	Did not explain the basis for his grading system	22
29	4	Did not discuss exams in class	18
30	39	Lectured in a monotone	18
31	49	Often came to class late	18
32	50	Missed class meetings more than once	17
33	17	Was vague and disorganized about course requirements	16
34	34	Forced the students to shoulder the entire burden of gaining knowledge of the subject	15
35	25	Introduced unfamiliar words or concepts without clarification	14
36	1	Lectured above students' level of comprehension	14
37	9	Repeated material to the point of monotony	14
38	41	Made a disparaging remark to a student in the presence of other students	13
39	19	Became confused when attempting to explain important points	12

contd

Rank Order	Item No.		Percent (N=4396)
40	28	Displayed favoritism	10
41	21	Refused to consider alternative solutions to problems	10
42	23	Did not admit that he was unable to answer some questions	10
43	2	Required excessive and unnecessary memorialization	10
44	14	Failed to take any measure to prevent cheating	10
45	6	Failed to return exams	9
46	13	Became angry or sarcastic	9
47	11	Ignored students' need for extra help	8
48	20	Came to class unprepared	7
49	31	Announced exams too late for students to prepare	7
50	36	Displayed nervousness and/or fear when covering difficult material	6

Table 3 indicates how the responding students in the entire university evaluated undergraduate introductory courses, other undergraduate courses, and graduate courses. From the table it can be seen that for those items whose better than average ratings were examined, (1-16, 25-33) the percentages grew larger as the level of courses increased, so that we find the smallest percentages at the level of introductory courses and the largest percentages at the graduate level, with the other undergraduate courses somewhere in between. For 23 of these 25 items the differences were significant at the .05 level or better, indicating that a difference this large could be expected by chance only five times out of 100.

The Form 2 questionnaire had four parts, each will be analyzed separately in the sections to follow.

Instructors. The data in Table 3 indicate that the faculty characteristics rated highest by students at all levels were "the command of subject matter" and "enthusiasm for subject." The latter item was also most observed by the students using Form 1. Within each level there was a discrepency between the teachers' "command of subject matter," (79%, 82%, 85%), and the "quality and organization of his lectures," (51%, 62%, 60%). In general the students were less impressed by the instructor's stimulation of student interest, the quality of his lectures and his availability out of class. These matters are relative however, since even these items were rated as above average by at least 50% of the students.

For the student-teacher relationship items (8, 9, & 11), the increases in the percentages from introductory to graduate level courses were greater than for other instructor items. The teacher's "ability to create classroom situations conducive to discussions," was low for introductory courses and higher for graduate courses. Two items that were perceived quite similarly by students in introductory courses and graduate courses were the instructor's "organization of his lectures" and "his availability out of class." Each of these attributes showed only a one percent increase from the lower level to the graduate level, a difference that was not statistically significant.

Texts. Students did not react favorably to their texts. The percentage of students who were pleased with their texts was much lower than for most other items on the questionnaire. Not a single text item was viewed above average by more than 40% of the students in any of the three groups, even though the upward trend from introductory courses to graduate courses was still apparent.

Course. The rating scale categories for course-related items were different than those for the rest of the questionnaire since category three was the perfect score. Analysis of these items was therefore based on the percentage of students who gave a perfect rating to an item. The highest rated aspects of the course were the length of assignments, the number of tests, and the grading, each of which was highly approved of by at least six out of every ten students. Even the lowest items such as the amount of class participation and the quality of the tests were highly approved of by over 50% of the students.

Students. Examination of the seven student items indicated that graduate students viewed themselves as better students and more interested and involved students, than did undergraduates. As can be seen from Table 3, the percentages of students taking graduate courses who rated their behavior above average ranged from 36% to 60% with a median of 48%, while the range for undergraduate courses was from 10% to 61%, with a median of 42%.

Student items fell into two clusters. On work items (items 25-28) the percentages of students who perceived their behavior as above average never reached 50%, whereas the percentages of students who viewed the involvement-interest items in the other cluster (items 29-31) as above average started at about 50%. This clustering held for all three groups even though the levels differed. It would appear that students do not work very hard in their courses and admit it. Even so, there was a difference in the work patterns of the students in the three groups. Larger percentages of upperclassmen and graduate students indicated that their course work habits were above average than did the students in introductory courses.

Between 51% and 56% of the students indicated that they had learned more than average in their courses. Fifty-one percent of the students in introductory courses, and 56% of those in all the other courses so indicated. This difference, though not large, was significant at the .01 level.

Answers to item 33 indicated that a significantly smaller percentage of students in introductory courses rated their courses above average than the other two groups. Forty-two percent of the students in introductory courses, 46% of those in the other undergraduate courses, and 48% of those in graduate school rated their courses above average.

Table 3

Percent of Respondents Rating Items Above Average

Item	Course Level		
	Introductory (N=9165)	Undergraduate (N=8144)	Graduate (N=3051)
1. Presentation of subject matter	57	60	62
2. Organization of lectures	59	62	60
3. Command of subject matter	79	82	85
4. Enthusiasm for subject	77	80	84
5. Enthusiasm for teaching	69	71	78
6. Interest in students	62	63	68
7. Creates classroom situation conducive to learning	54	56	59
8. Creates classroom situation conducive to discussions	51	58	68
9. Creates classroom situation conducive to questioning	58	61	68
10. Availability of teacher out of class	53	55	54
11. Consideration of opposing views	60	63	71
12. Stimulates students' interest	50	54	60
13. Quality of lectures	51	56	56
14. Cost of text	19	20	26
15. Clarity of presentation of text	32	36	38
16. Interest level of text	24	30	34
17. Class participation	51	55	55
18. Class lectures	62	61	57

contd

Item	Course Level		
	Introductory (N=9165)	Undergraduate (N=8144)	Graduate (N=3051)
19. Number of tests	64	67	66
20. Quality of tests	56	55	55
21. Grading	64	60	58
22. Level of presentation of text	60	61	59
23. Length of assignments	68	67	63
24. Time necessary for preparation for this course	58	58	57
25. Prepared daily assignments well	36	42	47
26. Did most of the suggested supplementary work	30	36	46
27. Did much unassigned and independent course-related work	18	25	36
28. Participated in class discussions	34	37	46
29. Asked questions in class	49	55	60
30. Attempted to make relationships between old and new material within this course	54	61	66
31. Attempted to make relationships between this course and others	50	60	68
32. Amount learned	51	56	56
33. Overall general impression	42	46	48

School Profiles

Table 4 presents the data for each item on Form 2 separately for each school within the University, and for each of the three levels of courses within each school. These figures can be considered as normative data within each of the nine categories. Thus, an instructor teaching an intermediate level course in HCLAS could compare his data with the figures in the appropriate column. If the percentage of students who rated him above average was higher than that given in the table, he could consider that he was above average on that item, if his percentage was lower, he was below average.

The data in this table could also be used in making comparisons among the three units within the University. These comparisons must be made with caution since schools are often not comparable because of different goals, different students and faculty, etc.

Introductory courses. The means for the instructor items show a gradual increase from 54% for the School of Business to 65% for the School of Education, with HCLAS in the middle with 62%. This pattern of the School of Education being highest was repeated in nine of the 13 items in this section. On three items HCLAS had the highest percentage: command of subject matter, enthusiasm for subject, and the quality of lectures. On the remaining item, the availability of the instructor out of class, the students in the three schools reacted similarly, with 50% giving an above average rating.

The pattern with respect to the course items, 17 to 24, was different. Here the three schools tended to be similar. On the two summary questions (32 and 33) the highest percentages were for HCLAS and the lowest for the School of Business.

Other undergraduate courses. The pattern for these courses was similar to the one for the introductory courses. The instructor was rated highest in the School of Education and lowest in the School of Business, with HCLAS in the middle. This pattern held for 11 of the 13 items. On two items, organization of lectures and command of subject matter, HCLAS ranked highest, but differences among the three units were small.

With respect to the ratings of the course, the differences among the schools were small. There is, however, some indication that students in the School of Business were less satisfied with the quality of tests and with the grading; and HCLAS students with class participation. On the two summary items, 32 and 33, HCLAS ranked highest, but differences were smaller than they were for the introductory courses.

Graduate courses. On an overall basis students in graduate courses in HCLAS and the School of Education tended to give similar ratings to their instructors. Students in the School of Business gave slightly lower ratings on the average. HCLAS instructors tended to receive significantly higher ratings on their command of subject matter, the quality of their lectures, and their availability out of class. School of Education instructors received significantly higher ratings on their enthusiasm for teaching.

The course ratings indicated the greatest satisfaction with the HCLAS graduate courses. With respect to the amount learned, item 32, HCLAS was higher than both of the other schools. With respect to overall impression, HCLAS was rated highest, with the School of Education next.

Table 4

Profiles of Schools within the University

Percentage of respondents giving above-average responses

	Introductory			Undergraduate			Graduate		
	Bus.	HCLAS	Ed.	Bus.	HCLAS	Ed.	Bus.	HCLAS	Ed.
No. of courses participating	34	300	22	50	207	69	19	45	121
Part I. Instructor. Means.	54	62	65	59	62	68	62	68	68
1. Presentation of subject	50	60	65	55	60	63	62	61	62
2. Organization of lectures	48	64	65	59	63	61	60	58	60
3. Command of subject matter	74	83	75	81	82	80	82	90	84
4. Enthusiasm for subject	71	80	76	76	79	84	81	87	84
5. Enthusiasm for teaching	60	72	76	65	70	82	73	75	80
6. Interest in students	54	63	69	60	62	71	54	66	69
7. Creates classroom situation conducive to learning	47	57	59	52	57	62	57	59	61
8. Creates classroom situation conducive to discussions	47	49	69	55	55	70	58	66	69
9. Creates classroom situation conducive to questioning	55	57	69	60	60	72	59	69	68
10. Availability of teacher out of class.	51	51	49	52	54	57	48	61	52
11. Consideration of opposing views	53	60	73	59	61	69	64	72	72
12. Stimulates students' interest	41	52	54	47	54	59	51	64	60
13. Quality of lectures	44	56	50	51	52	57	51	63	56
Part II. Text. Means.	18	26	21	19	30	30	26	40	31
14. Cost of text	9	18	18	10	21	21	23	34	25
15. Clarity of text	30	34	27	27	37	40	29	44	37
16. Interest level of text	16	25	19	20	32	30	26	42	32
Part III. Course. Means.	59	62	62	59	60	62	57	60	59
17. Class participation	55	51	56	60	53	62	52	56	55
18. Class lectures	62	63	63	61	60	64	55	60	56
19. Number of tests	60	65	67	63	67	64	71	65	66
20. Quality of tests	50	53	59	47	56	57	53	53	56
21. Grading	60	67	60	53	60	60	55	62	58

(continued)

	Introductory			Undergraduate			Graduate		
	Bus.	HCLAS	Ed.	Bus.	HCLAS	Ed.	Bus.	HCLAS	Ed.
22. Level of text	60	61	63	57	61	64	52	61	59
23. Length of assignments	67	69	65	68	66	66	59	68	63
24. Time necessary for preparation for this course	59	58	60	57	57	58	51	58	58
Part IV. Student. Means.	40	41	43	46	45	51	52	53	54
25. How well did you prepare daily assignments	33	36	36	40	40	50	48	46	48
26. How much supplementary work did you do	26	32	33	33	34	45	42	44	45
27. How much unassigned course-related work did you do	15	18	23	23	24	31	34	36	35
28. How often did you participate in class discussions	35	31	41	39	34	47	47	46	46
29. If you did not understand did you usually	54	49	56	58	52	61	59	56	70
30. Did you attempt to make relationships between old and new material	53	56	53	60	61	61	65	66	66
31. Did you attempt to make relationships between this course and others	56	50	52	62	60	63	64	70	67
32. How much did you learn in this course	48	54	50	54	57	53	56	62	55
33. Rate your overall general impression of this course by comparing it with all your other college courses	35	45	39	42	47	45	42	54	48

Faculty Reaction

In October 1969 a questionnaire was circulated to faculty members in an attempt to elicit their reactions to the course evaluations. The questionnaires were sent to department chairmen with a request that they be distributed, rather than utilizing the time consuming procedure of mailing one to each faculty member. Questionnaires were returned by 196 anonymous faculty members.

Based on the number of courses taught, we estimate that 138 of the respondents were full-time faculty members and 52 were part time. These represent approximately one third of the full-time teaching staff and one sixth of the part-time staff.

It cannot be claimed that the sample of respondents was representative, since we do not have data. We do not even know whether the questionnaire was distributed by all chairmen to whom it was sent. We do assume, however, that the questionnaires were returned by those faculty members who were most concerned about course evaluations--either positively or negatively. Evidence from many types of surveys indicates that responders tend to be those who are interested or concerned whereas non-responders tend to be more apathetic. Thus, the results can be considered useful in decision making.

Data indicating faculty response are provided in Table 5. These data indicate that 6% of the faculty had very negative reactions and 20% had either negative or very negative reactions. These figures compare to 7% who were very positive and 47% who were either positive or very positive. Thus, close to 50% of the faculty had positive reactions, and 80% were either positive or neutral. There was a slight tendency for the faculty to be less positive in June than in February. The complete data are presented in Table 5.

Almost two out of three faculty members, 64% said that they found the results useful. The uses to which the results were put included: improving the curriculum, restructuring courses, re-examination of teaching techniques and procedures, changes in teaching methods, and confirmation of instructor's estimates of their ability.

About one out of eight faculty members, 12%, said that the evaluation results were harmful. The reasons cited for this response included: they took too much class time, they cost too much, there was no place for the students to write comments, and too much time elapsed between the administration of the evaluation and the return of the results. Planning for future evaluations should take these criticisms into account.

About 2/3 of the respondents said that the evaluations should be continued, and the same percentage said that instructors should discuss the results with their students. In contrast, only 28% said that results for individual instructors should be made public.

In summary, approximately 2/3 of the faculty members approved of course evaluations and said they should be continued. But only between 1/4 and 1/3 said that results for individuals should be made public.

Table 5

Faculty Responses to the Course Evaluation
All Data are Given in Percentages

1. How many courses did you teach? (N=190)
   Fall 1968. Three or more 72; One or two 27
   Spring 1969. Three or more 73; One or two 26

2. In how many of your courses did you administer evaluations? (N=190)
   All 87, Most 8 } 95 About half 2 Some 2, None 1 } 3

3. What was your reaction to the evaluations? (N=188)
   Very negative 6, Negative 14 } 20 Neutral 33 Positive 40, Very positive 7 } 47

4. In your opinion what was the reaction of most students? (N=177)
   Very negative 2, Negative 32 } 34 Neutral 33 Positive 27, Very positive 6 } 33

5. How did your reaction in June compare to your reaction in February? (N=180)
   More positive 9 The same 74 More negative 17

6. Were the evaluation results useful to you? (N=190)
   Yes 64 No 36

7. Were the evaluation results harmful in any way? (N=187)
   Yes 12 No 88

8. Should the evaluations be continued? (N=178)
   Yes 66 No 34

   How often should they be given? (N=113)
   Every semester 49 Every two years 24
   Yearly 24 Every five years 4

9. Should instructors discuss results with their students? (N=166)
   Yes 66 No 34

10. Should results for individual instructors be made public? (N=175)
    Yes 28 No 72

Number of responses received was 196.

Student Reaction

As indicated earlier, a question relating to the meaningfulness of course evaluations was included on Form 2A of the questionnaire, which was administered in the spring 1969 semester. One out of every nine students, 11%, did not answer the question, presumably indicating a lack of interest. Of those who did respond, more than four out of ten, 43% had negative reactions. Only 29% said that the evaluations were meaningful, and 28% had a neutral reaction. Thus, the student reaction tended to be much more negative than the faculty reaction.

Discussion and Conclusions

The data presented in this report indicate much participation in the course evaluations throughout the university. While the extent of participation varied from one segment of the university to another, the overall rate of response, involving the participation of all students in 73% of the course sections in the fall semester, and 67% of the sections in the spring, probably represents one of the most extensive evaluation programs ever conducted at a large college or university in the U.S. Most evaluations involve a smaller percent of the student body than were involved in the present survey. While data are not available, it is probable that almost every full-time Hofstra student participated in the evaluation in at least one of his courses.

The utility of the evaluations lies in the differences among courses. While there was initial fear that such differences would be small, the data indicated the contrary. Instructors have indicated that some courses were reacted to very favorably by students, others were reacted to unfavorably. Within a given course some aspects were reacted to positively, others negatively. These differential reactions provide clear evidence that most students took the task seriously and reacted responsibly.

As indicated in this report, the data provided by the course evaluations were utilized in a number of ways. A set of results for each course was sent to the instructor for that course, and only to the instructor. He could either use the results, or could, if he chose, ignore them. By comparing the results for his courses with the normative data provided each department chairman, he could find out which aspects of his course were above average, and which were below average. As indicated by the questionnaire data, almost two out of every three faculty members said they found the results useful and beneficial.

Sets of results for each department were sent both to the department and to the appropriate dean. These could be used by the department chairman to compare the average evaluations of introductory, undergraduate, and graduate courses.

By comparing the results for a given department with those for the school as a whole, published in this report, the department chairman could evaluate the relative performance of his department. Since these data were also made available to each dean, he too could evaluate relative performance of the several departments within his school.

Profiles for each school were provided to the dean of the school. These provided a summary indication of the performance of that school. To the extent that the various schools are comparable, the profiles of the several schools could be compared. Several deans expressed an interest in seeing the results of individual department members, but under the circumstances this information could not be provided. In a number of cases individual instructors did make the data from their courses available to the dean.

Finally, the data for all courses were combined to yield an overall profile of Hofstra University, which has been presented in this report. While these data indicate that students tended to react favorably to Hofstra, this information is difficult to interpret. Since there are no comparable data for other institutions, it is impossible to determine Hofstra's comparative standing.

Thus, the evaluations were utilized in a number of valuable ways. There were, however, several needs that were not fulfilled. 1) Students were not given any feedback of the results for specific courses, although copies of this report will be made available to them. Since the confidentiality of the data was built into the evaluation program, individual results could not be published, even though this would have been useful to students in selecting courses. 2) The same confidentiality prevented the results for specific instructors being made available to department chairmen and deans, unless the individual instructor voluntarily let his chairman see the results. Several chairmen and deans said that this information could be very valuable to them in deciding such matters as promotion and tenure.

This discussion leads to the conclusion that before deciding on the future of course evaluations at Hofstra University, it is necessary to enumerate the goals of such an evaluation. The type of evaluation undertaken should then be decided in terms of the goals to be achieved.

1) If the goal is <u>to provide feedback to the instructor</u> so that he can evaluate and improve his teaching, evaluation should be voluntary. Each instructor should decide how to evaluate, using the services of CSHE and the Computer Center where appropriate. Results could be confidential.

2) If the goal is to provide information to students, all (or almost all) courses should be evaluated by all of the students (or at least a representative sample of students), and the results must be made public. This is what the Student Senate will attempt.

3) If the goal is to provide information to department chairmen and deans that would be useful in making decisions regarding retention, promotion, salary increases, or tenure, the evaluations could be selective in terms of the course sections evaluated. It would be necessary to obtain the responses of all or most of the students in a given class, and the results would be made available to appropriate administrators.

4) If the goal is to provide a profile of the University and the schools and departments within the University, this was accomplished by the evaluations in 1969. Similar evaluations could be conducted every three to five years in order to keep the profile current.